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# The Art of Translating

Tolman

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THE  
ART OF TRANSLATING

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO  
CAUER'S DIE KUNST DES UEBERSETZENS

BY  
HERBERT CUSHING TOLMAN, PH.D.  
PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

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οὐ πολλ' ἀλλὰ πολὺ

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BENJ. H. SANBORN & CO.  
BOSTON, U. S. A.  
1901

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**TO**  
**MY SISTER**  
**ANNA TOLMAN**  
**IN TOKEN OF HER MANY YEARS' WORK**  
**IN THE**  
**FRENCH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**





## PREFACE.

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I have read no book during my eight years of teaching which has been so suggestive as Cauer's "*Die Kunst des Uebersetzens*." That work has proved itself to me what the author entitles it: "*Ein Hilfbuch für den lateinischen und griechischen Unterricht*." I have found the principles therein laid down not only sound theoretically, but of practical benefit in the teaching of the classics. These same principles we ought, I believe, to extend and apply in the translation of any language, ancient or modern.

Our teaching of a foreign tongue is apt to be too mechanical. The student must be made to feel that the language he is studying is not something strange and mysterious, but natural and simple. This he cannot do until he changes his position and looks at the unfolding of the thought from the standpoint of the original. It is then, and not till then, that he really reaches the heart of his Latin or Greek, his French or German. It is then that he is prepared to enter upon what is as much an art as that of the sculptor, of the painter, of the designer; I mean the art of reproducing into living English his appreciation of all that the original has brought to him.

This little book is not based on that of Cauer in the sense that it is a translation or an adaptation of his work. I alone am responsible for many of the views herein expressed. Whatever I have translated from the German is indicated by quotation marks. Wherever an idea of Cauer's has been put in my own

language, his name follows within parentheses, or reference is given in a footnote. Due recognition has been made of other writings. Especially I would thank Professors W. G. Hale, H. C. G. von Jagemann, G. H. McKnight, and E. H. Babbitt, for their cordial permission to quote the passages given. In regard to Professor Hale I feel that it is not out of place in the preface of a book of this kind to state that to him more than to any other American scholar we owe the practical method of reading Latin now so generally adopted. The extracts from Tyrrell, Lowell, and Bayard Taylor I have used by special arrangement with and permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Company, the authorized publishers of Tyrrell's "Latin Poetry," the writings of James Russell Lowell, and Bayard Taylor's translation of "Faust." Several excellent translations of the late Professor Lane have been cited with the sanction of his son, Mr. G. M. Lane. I wish also to express my gratitude to my dear friends Dr. C. E. Little and Mr. Edwin Wiley for their careful criticism of my manuscript. My assistant, Dr. Benjamin M. Drake, has given valuable help in the reading of the proof.

The subject is such a broad one that I feel I have merely touched upon it here and there, but my hope is that these principles will be found at least suggestive in the reading and teaching of foreign languages.

HERBERT CUSHING TOLMAN.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY,  
November, 1900.

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# THE ART OF TRANSLATING.

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## READING THE ORIGINAL.

In reading a foreign tongue one must not think of translation: reading a language is one thing, translating it is another. At the very outset we must immerse ourselves in the current of the native thought and feeling. Vast the gulf between translation and its original. "The stream that escapes from the waste pipe of a fountain gives no notion of the rise and fall and swirl and spray and rainbow glitter of the volume of water that rejoices to return the sportive touch of the sunlight."<sup>1</sup>

To him alone who has entered the living heart of the French come the pathos and the power of Victor Hugo's famous lines; —

O ma pauvre opprimée!  
Ma Blanche! mon bonheur! ma fille bien-aimée!  
Lorsqu'elle était enfant, je la tenais ainsi.  
Elle dormait sur moi, tout comme la voici!  
Quand elle réveillait, si vous saviez quel ange!  
Je ne lui semblais pas quelque chose d'étrange,

<sup>1</sup> Gildersleeve, *Introductory Essay to Pindar*.

Elle me souriait avec ses yeux divins,  
 Et moi je lui baisais ses deux petites mains !  
 Pauvre agneau ! — Morte ! oh non ! elle dort et repose.  
 Tout à l'heure, messieurs, c'était bien autre chose,  
 Elle s'est cependant réveillée. — Oh ! j'attend.  
 Vous l'allez voir rouvrir ses yeux dans un instant !  
 Vous voyez maintenant, messieurs, que je raisonne,  
 Je suis tranquille et doux, je n'offense personne ;  
 Puisque je ne fait rien de ce qu'on me défend,  
 On peut bien me laisser regarder mon enfant.  
 J'ai déjà réchauffé ses mains entre les miennes ;  
 Voyez, touchez les donc un peu ! . . .

— *Le Roi s'amuse, Act V, Scene 5.*

As one whose eye is trained to receive a finer vision of the landscape detects delicacies of shade and outline on a great master's canvas, so the more the reader feels the heart throb of the original, the more he sees the skill of the poet translator who has rendered —

*My poor down-trodden child!*

My Blanche, my joy, my well-beloved one !  
 When she was but a child, I held her thus ;  
 She slept upon my breast, even as you see.  
 And when she woke — oh, could you know the angel  
 That looking from her eyes, saw me nor strange  
 Nor terrible, but smiled with heavenlike eyes  
 The while I kissed those poor small childish hands !  
 Poor lamb ! Dead ? Nay, she sleeps and takes her rest.  
 You will see soon, gentles, it is naught, 't is naught :

Even now she wakes to life — oh! I am watching —  
 You will see her ope her eyes — one moment yet!  
 She will ope her eyes — you see my sense is clear —  
 I brave no man — I am calm, I pray you see!  
 And seeing I have no will but to obey you,  
 I pray you let me look upon my child.  
 No furrow on her brow, no out-worn grief:  
 Already I have warmed her hands in mine.  
 Come, feel them now!

It is because the spirit of Tennyson is native to us  
 that we appreciate how admirably Strodtmann has  
 reproduced the familiar stanza: —

The splendor falls on castle walls  
 And snowy summits old in story;  
 The long light shakes across the lakes  
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
 Blow, bugle, blow; set the wild echoes flying.  
 Blow, bugle; — answer echoes, dying, dying, dying.

Es fällt der Strahl auf Burg und Thal  
 Und schneeige Gipfel, reich an Sagen;  
 Viel' Lichter wehn auf blauen Seen,  
 Bergab die Wasserstürze jagen!  
 Blas, Hüfthorn, blas, in Wiederhall erschallend  
 Blas, Horn — Antwortet, Echos, hallend, hallend, hallend.

And so we see that we are compelled to grasp the  
 idea from the standpoint of the original, — a stand-  
 point which may be, and often is, entirely different  
 from or directly opposed to that of the English. Let



us suppose the student is reading Greek and meets the simple Greek idiom *καλῶς ἔχειν*. In nine cases out of ten he is first taught the idiomatic English translation and then endeavors to work backward to the standpoint of the Greek. This is a sad case of *hysteron-proteron*. He is looking at the construction with English eyes, and it appears as foreign to him as if he were in a strange country; he does not and cannot feel the spirit of the Greek, since instinctively there steals into his mind the feeling that *καλῶς ἔχειν* by some mysterious process becomes the equivalent of *καλὸς εἶναι*. This is all wrong. He should be led to appreciate fully the Greek point of view before even attempting to render the phrase into the idiom of his own language.

Again, one ought to associate the words of a foreign language with the objects themselves, of which words are but vocal pictures. Take German, for instance: when the reader meets the word *Baum* there should recur at once to his mind the object itself, and not the English word *tree*; I mean by this that the mental process should be, not *Baum, tree*, the *object*, but *Baum*, the *object* and then the English *tree*. This last stage ought only to be reached when the reader assumes the rôle of a translator. While he is merely reading German, the English *tree* should not intrude into the thought.

There is some truth in Dr. Jagemann's words: "It is not necessary to translate Iphigenie into Eng-

lish in order to obtain the greatest possible amount of mental discipline which Goethe's wonderful work can yield. The mental process of translation consists of two parts: first, we must grasp the thought of the author; second, we must express this thought in the language into which we are translating. Now, in making the translation from German into English, only the first part of this mental process has any effect upon the student's knowledge of German; consequently, for the study of German we may be content if the student grasps the author's ideas, and this he can do without translating."<sup>1</sup>

I am very sure, to generalize from my own experience, that every American who has studied at the German universities has tried at first to take in English the notes of his professor, and desperately failed. It is only when he forgets English and grasps the idea in German itself that he can carry away any satisfactory conception of what he has heard. The reason of this is plain enough. It is that the mind has not to go through any intervening stage before gathering the idea from the spoken language.

A student spends six years in the study of Latin, let us say, and at the end of that time has to worm his way painfully through a Latin sentence, often with slavish dependence on a dictionary. Or he

<sup>1</sup> Transactions of Modern Language Association, Vol. I, pp. 225, 226.

devotes five years to French and does not acquire such freedom in the spoken language as a child gains during a six months' stay in Paris in constant association with French playmates. When this state of things exists there must be something wrong with our method of instruction. Where is the fault? Undoubtedly, it lies in the fact that the student is made to feel that the language he is studying is foreign to his way of thinking. Something comes between him and the text which he is reading. If it be Latin, for example, he unfortunately has the misconception that he must strain and twist his English to fit the Latin form of expression. There will never be a remedy for this until the pupil is taught to *think* in Latin, — until he is brought to feel that the Latin sentence is natural, not mysterious. It is the spirit of the original that he must get — this is the life of the sentence; and until he breathes this spirit, Latin or any other language will be in too true a sense a dead language.

Professor Hale put it strongly and concisely when he said: "Reading the original is the one method that should everywhere be rigorously used from the day of the first lesson to the last piece of Latin that the college graduate reads to solace his old age. *Only, the process which at first is at every point conscious and slow, as it was not with the Romans, becomes in Latin of ordinary difficulty a process wholly unconscious and very rapid, precisely as it was with the Romans.*

. . . We must for some time think out, at every point, as the sentence progresses (and that without ever allowing ourselves to look ahead), all those conveyings of meaning, be they choice of words, or choice of order, or choice of case, or choice of mode, or choice of tense, or whatever else which at that point suffice for the Roman mind. And, when these indications — which after all are not so many in number — have come to be so familiar to us that most of them are ready to flash before the mind without our deliberately summoning them, we shall be very near the point at which, in Latin graded to our growing powers, we shall interpret indications unconsciously. And the moment we do that we shall be reading Latin by the Roman's own method." <sup>1</sup>

Read the original, think in the original, — that is the whole story. The advice of a famous German professor for the acquisition of a vocabulary applies here equally well: "*Lesen, viel lesen, sehr viel lesen, sehr viel viel lesen.*"

It is only by reading the foreign tongue that we really enter, as we must, its life and strength. How widely different its spirit often is from that of our own has been well observed in De Quincey's splendid differentiation of Greek and English tragedy: "To my own feeling the different principle of passion which governs the Grecian conception of tragedy as compared with the English, is best conveyed by say-

<sup>1</sup> The Art of Reading Latin, pp. 15-17.

ing that the Grecian is a breathing from the world of sculpture, the English a breathing from the world of painting. What we read in sculpture is not absolutely death, but still less is it the fullness of life. . . . It affects us profoundly, but not by agitation. Now, on the other hand, the breathing life — life kindling, trembling, palpitating — that life which speaks to us in painting, this is also the life that speaks to us in English tragedy. Into an English tragedy even festivals of joy may enter; marriages and baptisms, or commemorations of national trophies; which, or anything like which, is incompatible with the very being of the Greek. In that tragedy what uniformity of gloom; in the English what light alternating with the depths of darkness! The Greek, how mournful; the English, how tumultuous! Even the catastrophes how different! In the Greek we feel a breathless waiting for a doom that cannot be evaded; a waiting, as it were, for the last shock of an earthquake, or the inexorable rising of a deluge; in the English it is like a midnight of shipwreck, from which up to the last and till the final ruin comes, there still survives a sort of hope that clings to human energies."

But De Quincey's words give us only one point of view. While it is true that we have to transport our sentiments and feelings to what is distinctly foreign, and to immerse ourselves, as I have said, in the life and thoughts of other lands and peoples in order to

imbibe their spirit, yet the great lessons of mankind are the same for all ages, because the human heart and human life must always wrestle with the problems of duty and trial. How admirably is this brought out by Symonds in his feeling comments on the matchless choric odes of Æschylus' "Agamemnon": "To read the Greek aright in this wonderful lyric, so concentrated in its imagery, and so direct in its conveyance of the very soul of passion, is no light task; but far more difficult it is to render it into another language. Yet, even thus, we feel that this poem of defrauded desire and everlasting farewell, of vain outgoings of the spirit after vanished joy, is written not merely for Menelaus and the Greeks, but for all who stretch forth empty hands to clasp the dreams of dear ones, and then turn away, face-downward on the pillow, from the dawn, to weep or strain hot eyes that shed no tears. Touched by the same truth of feeling, which includes all human nature in its sympathy, is the lament, shortly after uttered by the Chorus, for the numberless fair men who died before Troy town. Ares, the grim gold-exchanger, who barter the bodies of men, sends home a little dust shut up within a narrow urn, and wife and father water this with tears, and cry, — Behold, he perished nobly in a far land, fighting for a woman, another's wife. And others there are who come not even thus again to their old home; but barrows on Troy plain enclose their young flesh, and

an alien soil is their sepulcher. This picture of beautiful dead men, warriors and horsemen, in the prime of manhood, lying stark and cold, with the dishonor of the grave upon their comely hair, and with the bruises of the battle on limbs made for love, is not meant merely for Achaians, but for all — for us, perchance, whose dearest moulder on Crimean shores or Indian plains, for whom the glorious faces shine no more; but at best some tokens, locks of hair, or books, or letters, come to stay our hunger unassuaged. How truly and how faithfully the Greek poet sang for all ages, and for all manner of men, may be seen by comparing the strophes of this Chorus with the last rhapsody but one of the chants outpoured in America by Walt Whitman, to commemorate the events of the great war. The pathos which unites these poets, otherwise so different in aim and sentiment, is deep as nature, real as life; but from this common root of feeling springs in the one verse a spotless lily of pure Hellenic form, in the other a mystical thick growth of fancy, where thoughts brood and nestle amid tufted branches; for the powers of classic and of modern singers upon the same substance of humanity are diverse.”<sup>1</sup>

Translation is like the art of painting. No artist feels ready to paint until he knows what he is going to paint. He does not paint a bush and then a tree and then a stone as they come along, but first of all

<sup>1</sup> The Greek Poets, Vol. I, pp. 425, 426.

he gets a grand vision of the landscape, he lets it sink into his soul, and then he is ready to begin his painting. Precisely so with the art of the translator. He should never attempt to translate until the idea of the original is clearly before his mind. How many jump at a Greek sentence in the following way: "τήνδ', *this one*; ὁρᾷς, *you see*; δάμαρτα, *wife*; σήν, *thy*." To use our figure again, this method of translating is like painting bit by bit, without the extended vision. Get first the Greek idea, regardless of corresponding English *words*; then when called upon to translate, reproduce the Greek *thought* in an English sentence which will conserve the emphasis; for example, "In her you behold your wife." Morris may render the words of "*Ast ego quae divum incedo regina*" (Vergil, *Æn.* i, 46), "I who go for the queen of the gods," but Thornhill gives us the spirit in "I who queen it through these courts of heaven."

As E. H. Babbitt remarks in his article on "Mental Discipline of Modern Languages": "Suppose that the pupil has a clear understanding of a French sentence: his work is only half done; he has then to make English of it. Here the difficulty is that the pupil will render words without much regard to their sense when taken in connection with the whole. . . . The aim should be to get a clear conception of what the author means, and then bearing in mind that nothing has often been said in French or German which cannot be said equally well in English,



insist on having an English rendering which expresses the idea correctly, and does no violence to the English idiom."

The more one enters into the spirit of the language he is reading, the more he appreciates the responsibility of the translator, and realizes that many times it is impossible to bring over into English the heart of the original construction. Just as the eye of the artist, which by training enters more deeply into the soul of nature, realizes more than the inexperienced eye the difficulty of the task, and is more keenly aware of the powerlessness of the brush to portray all that is in the landscape, so the trained translator appreciates how exacting is his art. Take Cicero's fine translation from the "Cresphontes" of Euripides and note how Tyrrell has delicately reproduced the same: —

Nam nos decebat coetu celebrantes domum  
Lugere ubi esset aliquis in lucem editus,  
Humanae vitae varia reputantes mala;  
At qui labores morte finisset graves  
Hunc omni amicos laude et laetitia exsequi.

— *Tusc. Disp.*, i, 115.

When a child's born, our friends should throng our halls  
And wail for all the ills that flesh is heir to;  
But when a man has done his long day's work  
And goes to his long home to take his rest,  
We all with joy and gladness should escort him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tyrrell, *Latin Poetry*, p. 19.

"The task of the translator," says Bayard Taylor, "is not simply mechanical; he must feel, and be guided by, a secondary inspiration. Surrendering himself to the full possession of the spirit which shall speak through him, he receives, also, a portion of the same creative spirit."<sup>1</sup>

Here are four simple rules which, if observed, will lead, I believe, to a deeper appreciation of a foreign tongue: (1) *Read*, READ, READ the original without endeavoring to translate. (2) Cultivate independence of the lexicon. (3) Acquire vocabulary. (4) Cease to fear the foreign sentence as something strange or uncanny. The test is not what one has read, but the ability he has acquired from reading what he has, to read more just like it with greater ease.

In one word, we must *think* in the original. That is no impossible ideal; it is the only true goal of language study. When this is acquired, Latin and Greek, French and German, will not be laid aside on leaving the college walls, for it is true that what is once learned can never be unlearned, what is once gotten can never be forgotten. Then the wish of Goethe respecting the classics will be fulfilled: "*Möge das Studium der griechischen und römischen Literatur immerfort die Basis der höheren Bildung bleiben.*"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Translation of *Faust*, Preface, p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Sprüche in Prosa.

### THE WORK OF THE TRANSLATOR.

Before the translator begins his task he must have read thoroughly the sentence in the original and grasped its meaning. Should he attempt translation before this, he is like the builder who essays to build a house before knowing its plan. No architect allows a single block of stone to be put in place without having before him the design of the completed structure. So if one plunges immediately into translating the words in the order in which they come without knowing the idea of the finished sentence, he is like one who is simply building blocks, but not erecting an edifice after some great pattern.

Remember that translation is not rendering the words of a foreign language into English, but it is the metamorphosis of the feeling, the life, the power, the spirit of the original. In other words, — and I put them in italics for their emphasis, — *translation is arousing in the English reader or hearer the identical emotions and sentiments that were aroused in him who read or heard the sentence as his native tongue.* Translation is nothing more than this, and it certainly is nothing less. As Wilamowitz puts it: “The translator’s object must be to construct a sentence which will make upon readers of to-day exactly the same im-

pression that was made by the original upon people who were contemporaries of the author, awakening as nearly as possible the same thoughts and sentiments." <sup>1</sup>

Let us illustrate again by the art most nearly like the art of translating, that is, painting. The subject of the painting may be the war-steed. The trained hand portrays him with flashing eye, arched neck, expanded nostrils; the artist feels the martial spirit and reproduces it in his work. The unskilful hand and the untrained eye give us only legs and head and body. Perhaps we cannot deny that the object is a horse, but one thing surely is not there, that is, the spirit of the original. In the same way one translator reproduces the idea of a sentence with all the feeling, grandeur, beauty, and delicacy that it contains; the other gives us in shabby garments the idea which had been clothed by the writer in majestic robes. The strong line of Ennius, which, as Tyrrell says, has been compared to the voice of an oracle,

*Moribus antiquis stat Res Romana virisque,*  
one may render, "The Roman State stands on its ancient customs and men"; another, —

Broad-based upon her men and principles  
Standeth the state of Rome. (*Tyrrell.*)

Perhaps we can't deny that both translations contain the same idea; but where the spirit in the former?

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cauer, *Die Kunst des Uebersetzens*, p. 5.

It is just as much the duty of the translator to transmute the force of the original into his translation as it is the duty of the artist to reproduce the grandeur of nature in his picture. Anything short of this is failure. Anything short of this does not constitute translation. But how difficult the task! Note the confessions of some of the greatest translators. "All translation," writes Wilhelm von Humboldt to Wilhelm von Schlegel, the German translator of Shakespeare, "seems to me but an attempt to accomplish what is impossible. Every translator must run shipwreck on one of two rocks: either at the cost of the style and idiom of his own nation, he will hold too closely to the original, or at the cost of the original, he will hold too closely to the peculiarity of his nation. The middle ground between these is not only hard, but absolutely impossible."<sup>1</sup>

It was Haupt who said of translation that it was death to understanding. Julius Keller, in his "*Die Grenzen der Uebersetzungskunst*," remarks that language is not a garment which can be replaced by another,<sup>2</sup> but it grows inseparably with the thought, at once both form and parcel of its content.<sup>3</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cauer, *Die Kunst des Uebersetzens*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "Art thou that Virgil?"—the question of Dante—must be put to every adventurous spirit who attempts to clothe Virgil in the garb of a new tongue."—*Tyrrell*.

<sup>3</sup> Most aptly does Keller remark: "Das wirklich Uebersetzbare an der Dialektdichtung, d. h. der begriffliche Kern, ist nichts weiter als der gerupfte Vogel."

translator must seek out those elements in the grammatical and logical framework of speech which with some surety may be taken as similar, and which may serve as a scaffolding for translation. In spite of the limitations of translation, he should advance towards an intelligent and expressive use of this art.<sup>1</sup>

Significant are the following words of Cauer: "A double task confronts the translator; first, the language into which he translates must be genuine living (English), not an artificial, Grecized or Latinized (English); else how can it come near to our feelings? In the second place, the peculiar style of the old poet or author must be preserved. Homer must be translated into different (English) from Vergil, Tacitus from Cicero. For the first task the translator must have mastery over his own language. For the second, the translator must breathe the spirit of his author and from that standpoint build his (English) sentence. From this it is obvious that there must be a distinct art of translating for each separate author. One must constantly be on guard against too great literalness. The translation which follows the original, word by word, and sentence by sentence, may give us an idea of the author's peculiarities of form, but in ugly diagram. So Don Quixote (x, 10) compares translation to the wrong side of a Dutch tapestry, where the figures appear, it is true, but are obscured by the crossing of diagonal

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cauer, *Die Kunst des Uebersetzens*, p. 5.

threads.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, if one strives to do away with great and small blemishes, there is danger that while the picture may be made more regular, it will lose the characteristics of the original. While the translator cannot reach an absolute settlement between these conflicting demands upon his art, yet should he abandon his effort he becomes like the painter who refuses to paint the landscape or human face because he cannot reproduce each individual part, twigs, leaves, wrinkles, hair. It is his art that can bring out the living delineations which photography by pedantic faithfulness annihilates."<sup>2</sup>

Our translation must be genuine English. Wilhelm Münch, in his "*Kunst des Uebersetzens aus dem Französischen*," says: "There has arisen in translation a jargon which advances in an inflexible armor that is peculiarly foreign." It behooves every teacher of the classics to banish this "school jargon."<sup>3</sup> Certainly no author more than Homer abounds in opportunities to bring a translator down from a stilted style. In

<sup>1</sup> "Alwales conceiving how pedanticall and absurd an affectation it is, in the interpretation of any Author, to turn him word for word; when, according to Horace and other best lawgivers to translators, it is the part of every knowing and judicall interpreter, not to follow the number and order of the words, but the material things themselves, and sentences to weigh diligently; and to clothe and adorn them with words, and such a stile and form of oration as are most apt for the language into which they are converted."—*Chapman's Translation of Homer, 1598.*

<sup>2</sup> Cauer, *Die Kunst des Uebersetzens*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lattmann, *Der Schul-Jargon des latein. Unterrichts*.

the majority of cases the beginner will translate, "In very truth you are a base man," whereas he ought to say, if faithful to his English idiom, "You are a villain, no doubt about it" (*cf.* Cauer).<sup>1</sup> How many students render, *Is M. Messala et M. Pisone consulibus*, "He, in the consulship of Messala and Piso." They forget that the natural English order is, "In the consulship of Messala and Piso he made a conspiracy." Often the cumbersome and prosaic "that one" grates upon the ear and mars what might otherwise be a good translation. Render *multum ille et terris iactatus et alto*, "much tossed that man by land and sea" (Lane). Our English abstract idiom requires that we translate, *Quid hostis virtute posset et quid nostri auderent periclitabatur*, "He was testing the valor of the enemy and the courage of our men."<sup>2</sup>

The Greek ἄ βούλομαι is "my wishes," not "those things which I wish." Don't translate "Alcestis," 1036, *Χρόνῳ δὲ καὶ σύ μ' αἰνέσεις ἴσως*, "In time you will approve me perhaps," but "Perhaps the time will come when you will thank me." Avoid rendering οὐ σ' ἀτίζων "not dishonoring you," but say "with no disrespect to you." In "Alcestis," 1095, *ἐπ' ἤνεσ' ἀλόχῳ πιστὸς οὐνεκ' εἰ φίλος*, Heracles would hardly have said, "I praise you because you are a faithful

<sup>1</sup> Excellent examples are cited by G. Lejeune-Dirichlet, *Die Kunst des Uebersetzens in die Muttersprache*. Jahrb. Philol. Pädag. 150 (1894), p. 514 fg.

<sup>2</sup> Hints for Translating, Harper and Tolman's *Cæsar*, p. 326.



friend to your wife," but rather, "I commend you for being so loyal to your wife." In Plato's "Republic" the natural English equivalent for *ἄσπερ αὐτὸς ὦν ὁ Χρύσης* is not the literal translation of the words, but "he takes the person of Chryses" (Jowett).

It demands some patience on the part of the teacher to secure a natural and free rendering of such French expressions as : *Je sais qu'on vous a rendu justice*, "I see that you have met your deserts." *Si vous écrivez à Jean dites-lui bien des choses de ma part*, "If you write to John remember me to him." *Il pleut déjà moins fort*, "It does n't rain so much as it did." *Nous avons arrêté ensemble que vous deviez en agir ainsi* (Mérimée's "Colomba," xiv), "We have decided to do so." *De quel côté allait-il?* (Mérimée's "Colomba," xv), "What way did he take?"

The English translator of the satirists has a language at his command peculiarly fitted (especially in its Saxon element) to lash, gall, and sting with a vehemency unsurpassed and well-nigh unrivaled. He should bring out the sharp edge of satire with such effect that every word of his vocabulary should cut as keenly and pierce as deep as the original; for example :—

Cum iam semianimum laceraret Flavius orbem  
Ultimus, et calvo serviret Roma Neroni.

— *Juvenal, iv, 37.*

When Flavius, drunk with fury, tore  
The prostrate world which bled at every pore,  
And Rome beheld in body as in mind  
A bald-pate Nero rise again to curse mankind.

— *Tyrrell.*

"Translation," says James Russell Lowell, "compels us to such a choosing and testing, to so nice a discrimination of sound, propriety, position, and shade of meaning, that we now first learn the secret of the words we have been using or misusing all our lives, and are gradually made aware that to set forth even the plainest matter as it should be set forth is not only a very difficult thing, calling for thought and practice, but an affair of conscience as well. Translating teaches us as nothing else can, not only that there is a best way, but that it is the only way. Those who have tried it know too well how easy it is to grasp the verbal meaning of a sentence or of a word. That is the bird in the hand. The real meaning, the soul of it, that which makes it literature and not jargon, that is the bird in the bush which tantalizes and stimulates with the vanishing glimpses we catch of it as it flits from one to another lurking place.

"Et fugit ad salices et se cupit ante videri.

"It was these shy allurements and provocations of Omar Khayyam's Persian which led Fitzgerald to

many a peerless phrase and made an original poet of him in the very act of translating."

Since translation is the reproduction of the spirit of the original, we ought to be faithful to the imperfections as well as to the beauties of the author we are translating. Rothfuchs lays down the rule that the translator should not weed out the weaknesses of a writer, for by doing this he destroys his peculiarities of style. The omission of *videor* or *mihi videtur* in Cicero annihilates a marked flavor of his diction. We must leave him the satisfaction he felt in tossing about upon the waves of empty words.<sup>1</sup>

Cauer suggests that the translator should always observe any broken syntax or obscurity there may be in the original. In Vergil's *Æneid*, iv, 625, *Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor*, how vivid the transfer from the second to third person, "Arise, some avenger from our bones."

Don't make the translation more elegant than the original, for if the original creeps, the translation should not soar. That is Frazer's mistake, if you can call it such, in his monumental work on Pausanias. The style of Pausanias is broken and slovenly, but Frazer has rendered the Greek in a stately English. This is like an artist giving to a picture a higher coloring than that of the scene before him, or converting into a grand edifice on his copy what is but a rude building in the landscape.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cauer, *Die Kunst des Uebersetzens*, p. 78.

How effective is the plain, almost homely form of expression, *La verdad adelgaza, y no quiebra, y siempre anda sobre la mentira, como el azeyte sobre el agua* (Don Quixote, v, 10), "Truth may be thin, but has no rent, and always mounts above the lie as oil above the water." We can compare Jonson's blunt diction : —

Get money ; still get money, boy ;  
No matter by what means ;

or Cowper's familiar style : —

The man that hails you Tom or Jack,  
And proves by thumps upon your back  
How he esteems your merit,  
Is such a friend that one had need  
Be very much a friend indeed  
To pardon or to bear it.

Very cleverly has Rabutin translated Martial's epigram : —

Non amo te, Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare ;  
Hoc tantum possum dicere ; non amo te.

Je ne vous aime pas, Hylas ;  
Je n'en saurais dire la cause ;  
Je sais seulement une chose,  
C'est que je ne vous aime pas.

Every school boy is familiar with Tom Brown's happy rendering of the same, a rendering which, we

may say, has immortalized Dr. Fell, then dean of Christ Church, Oxford : —

I do not love thee, Doctor Fell,  
The reason why I cannot tell ;  
But this I 'm sure I know full well,  
I do not love thee, Doctor Fell.

The doggerel appended to five of Euripides' dramas —

πολλὰ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων,  
πολλὰ δ' ἀέλπτως χραίνουσι θεοί·  
καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἐτελέσθη,  
τῶν δ' ἀδοχέων πόρον ἦρε θεός·  
τοιόνδ' ἀπέβη τόδε πρᾶγμα —

hardly warrants a more dignified translation than the jesting one which Gildersleeve gives it : —

How many the shapes of these devilish japes!  
And much that is odd 's fulfilled by the gods;  
That comes not about for which you look out;  
What you don't expect that God does effect,  
And such was the course of this story.

— *Essays and Studies*, p. 194.

When Sallust, Livy, or Tacitus, under influence of vivid description, ignores tense and person, and uses the so-called historical infinitive, the translator should endeavor to convey into English the excitement and confusion of the original ; for example, *Interea Catilina in prima acie versari, laborantibus succurrere*,

(Sallust, Catiline, 60, 4), "Catiline meantime bustling round in the forefront of battle, helping them that were sore bestead" (Lane).

A word of caution is needed in reproducing such a simple style as that of Homer. We must not fail to remember that the Homeric narrative was accented by voice and gesture. The spirit of the original can only be preserved by an endeavor to convert these into language. Cauer gives a good illustration of this in his remarks on the Homeric tenses: "In relating past events Homer always uses the same tense, without considering in what relation the individual events stand to one another. He only shows their remoteness from the standpoint of the relater. Odysseus says to Nausicaa, 'I marvel at the palm tree, for no such stalk had ever sprung from earth,' *ἐπεὶ οὐπω τοῖον ἀνέλυθεν ἐκ δόρυ γαίης* (§ 167). If in such cases we should use simply the (English) preterite in place of our natural pluperfect, we should be like a painter who intentionally ignores the art of perspective and represents a landscape in the childishly helpless manner of earlier times,—a manner which pictures trees, houses, and men all of equal size and of equal distinctness, as if all were at an equal distance from the beholder. This treatment is so foreign to us that it interferes with our understanding and enjoyment. We are consequently so much the more justified in altering such treatment in translating, since by so doing we

are only replacing a part of the help which was furnished to the hearer by accentuation and gesture. In later Greek also it is often the case that an aorist or an imperfect in a subordinate clause must be replaced by the (English) pluperfect; for example, *οἱ Κερκυραῖοι Κυλλήνην τὸ Ἠλείων ἐπίνειον ἐνέπρησαν, ὅτι ναῦς καὶ χρήματα παρέσχον Κορινθίοις* (Thucydides, i, 30), 'the Corcyreans burned Cyllene, the arsenal of the Eleans, because they had furnished the Corinthians with ships and money.' The whole system of the Greek tenses rests on a manner of thought essentially different from that of (English) German or Latin. To the Greek the most important thing in what he was narrating was the manner of the action. The different stages of the past did not come into the expression. The temporal relation between numerous past actions was unspecified, so that the reader or hearer had to conclude from the context the order of events."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cauer, *Die Kunst des Uebersetzens*, p. 81.

## TRANSLATION NOT EXPLANATION.

One thing I wish to emphasize strongly, — *translation is not interpretation*. The work of the translator is one, the work of the exegete is another. Very true are the words of Wilhelm von Humboldt: “*Eine Uebersetzung kann und soll kein Kommentar sein.*” If the original be ambiguous, a faithful translation should be just as ambiguous as the original. “Here are tears for sorrows and hearts grieve for mortal lot” is certainly a translation, however far short of the meaning of the original it may come, of Vergil’s exquisitely touching line —

Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt;

but Tyrrell’s “E’en things inanimate [*res*, the material picture] can weep for us, and the works of man’s hands [*mortalia*] have their own pathetic power” is a crowding it full of ingenious interpretations and laborious speculations.

Indefiniteness, often intentional on the part of a writer, as well as the suspense which the developed inflectional system of Latin and Greek readily introduces into a sentence, must be imitated as far as our idiom will allow. In the “Agamemnon” of Æschylus,



οὕτω δ' Ἀτρεΰς παῖδας ὁ κρείσσων | ἐπ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ πέμ-  
πει ξένιος | Ζεὺς, πολυάνορος ἀμφὶ γυναικός, note how  
indefinite the poet has made the lines. When the  
Greek met the emphatic κρείσσων, he did not yet know  
to whom it referred; he mounts a ladder of which  
ξένιος is the next step and reaches the summit Ζεὺς.  
The order of thought is: "And so a greater power  
sends against Alexandros the sons of Atreus, a power  
that guards hospitality, a power which is no other  
than Zeus himself." Vergil's picture of Helen  
crouching by the altar grows darker with each suc-  
ceeding word: —

Illa sibi infestos eversa ob Pergama Teucros,  
Et poenas Danaum et deserti coniugis iras  
Permetuens, Troiae et patriae communis Erinnyas,  
Abdiderat sese atque aris invisa sedebat.

She, shrinking from the Trojans' hate,  
Made frantic by their city's fate,  
Nor dreading less the Danaan sword,  
The vengeance of her injured lord:  
She, Troy's and Argos' common fiend,  
Sat cowering, by the altar screened.

— Conington.

Goethe, in imitation of the Homeric style, writes:  
So sprach, unter dem Thore des Hauses sitzend am  
Markte,  
Wohlbehaglich zur Frau der Wirth zum goldenen  
Löwen.

— *Hermann und Dorothea*, i, 20.

We are at liberty to supply ellipses only when the sense of the English sentence would be absolutely defective without doing so. A free supplying of words or phrases, to use a figure of Cauer, can "easily play a rôle similar to that which the subsidiary line often plays in the construction of a planimetric problem. It ought never to enter simply as a *deus ex machina*."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cauer, Die Kunst des Uebersetzens, p. 69.

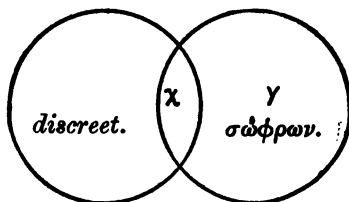
NOTE.—As a good illustration of what a translation ought not to be I might cite such a rendering as that given by Professor Max Müller to Chândogya Upanishad, i, 1, 7. An exact translation of the original Sanskrit would run: "By that [syllable] the threefold knowledge advances; OM he utters, OM he chants, OM he sings, for the glory of that syllable because of its power and essence." Max Müller translates: "By that syllable does the threefold knowledge (the sacrifice, more particularly the Soma-sacrifice, as founded on the three Vedas) proceed. When the Adhvaryu priest gives an order, he says Om. When the Hotri priest recites, he says Om. When the Udgâtri priest sings, he says Om,—all for the glory of that syllable. The threefold knowledge (the sacrifice) proceeds by the greatness of that syllable (the vital breaths), and by its essence (the oblations)."

Such a "translation" is not a translation; it is an interpretation so stuffed with padding as even to obscure the sense of the passage.

## THE CHOICE OF WORDS.

The choice of words in translation is what the selection of color is in painting. It often happens that no English word exists that contains all the fullness of meaning of the foreign word; while on the other hand, it is often the case that we can find no English word but what is stronger than the idea contained in the original. Let us illustrate by Greek and English. The figure that Cauer has borrowed from Schopenhauer is admirably adapted to illustrate the frequent overlapping of ideas. Let us draw two intersecting circles. If we take the idea in the English *horse* and that in the Greek ἵππος, the circumferences of the two circles must nearly coincide. But if we put, for example, the idea in σώφρων into one circle and the idea in our English *discreet* into another, it will follow that a part of the idea in the circle *discreet* comes within the Greek circle σώφρων, but a part of the circle σώφρων lies outside of the circle *discreet*, as also a part of the circle *discreet* lies outside of the circle σώφρων. The task of the translator is to get an English word whose circle will be as nearly coincident with that of the Greek word as possible. Accordingly he should not hesitate to use a different English word for σώφρων in a different appli-

cation, since if he always renders *σώφρων* by the same English word, he may introduce a quality not in the Greek at all. To make this clear we will use a diagram.



Let a quality  $x$  of the Greek circle *σώφρων* be characteristic of an object  $z$ , then the English *discreet* can also apply to  $z$ , since  $x$  represents what *σώφρων* and *discreet* have in common. On the other hand, let a quality  $y$  of *σώφρων* be characteristic of an object  $w$ , then we see that the English word *discreet* would be inapplicable to  $w$ , since the quality of *σώφρων* represented by  $y$  lies outside the circle *discreet*.

Right here, let us note, is where the classical student gets the fullest disciplinary value in his study of Latin and Greek. The struggle in the discrimination of words which he encounters in the selection of the most appropriate English term for *σώφρων* in different applications is the same that increases his power to choose the exact English word for his ideas. All this is correspondingly true of modern languages,

especially in the case of poetry. "In German," says Bayard Taylor, "a word which in ordinary use has a bare, prosaic character, may receive a fairer and finer quality from its place in verse. The prose translator should certainly be able to feel the manifestation of this law in both languages, and should so choose his words as to meet their reciprocal requirements. A man, however, who is not keenly sensible to the power and beauty and value of rhythm is likely to overlook these delicate yet more necessary distinctions. The author's thought is stripped of a last grace in passing through his mind, and frequently presents very much the same resemblance to the original as an unhewn shaft to the fluted column."<sup>1</sup>

The English, above all languages abounds in niceties of expression, a neglect of which is stultifying. When we strain the unfortunately elastic power of such terms as *good* or *thing*, instead of using words which might accurately express our ideas even to the subtlest shade of meaning, we sin against ourselves as well as against our language. We shut ourselves into a little circle and miss the vast outside. We do not draw on our treasure house. It is well to remember the words of Jacob Grimm, which, coming as they do from a foreigner, carry with them greater force. "In copiousness," he says, "in close arrangement of parts, in keen understanding, not one of the living languages can be matched with

<sup>1</sup> Translation of Faust.

English, — no, not even our own German, which must rid itself of many imperfections before it proves itself equal to its possibilities.”<sup>1</sup>

If it be true that ideas in a foreign word and in an English word overlap, how much more true is it in the case of the finished sentence. The effort of the translator is to bring the original and the English sentences into such coincidence as his skill will allow. I doubt if absolute coincidence — except in sentences of simple meaning — is possible, for the work of the translator, like that of the painter, is toward an infinite goal. No painter, however skilful, can reproduce a landscape *perfectly* true to nature. The best painter is not the one who paints the scene with exactness in color and detail; but the best painter is he who, overmastered by the greatness of the vision and realizing the limitations of his art, paints the scene *most true* to nature. So the best translator is not he who *exactly* reproduces the original in English, — for that is impossible, — but he who *most nearly* reproduces it. In saying this I do not depreciate the work of translating; on the other hand, I emphasize the infinite possibilities of the art. Look at the picture of a mother's love in the beautiful lines of Simonides: —

δτε λάρνακι κεῖτ' ἐν δαιδαλέῃ,  
 ἄνεμός τ' ἐφόρει μιν πνέων κινηθεῖσά τε λίμνα,  
 δεῖμα προσεῖρπε τότ' οὐκ ἀδιδάντοισι παρειαῖς,

<sup>1</sup> Ueber den Ursprung der Sprache.

ἀμφί τε Περσέϊ βάλλε φίλαν χέρ', εἶπεν τ' ὦ τέκος,  
οἶον ἔχω πόνον· σὺ δ' ἄωτεῖς·  
γαλαθηνῶ λάθει κνώσσεις ἐν ἄτερπεϊ  
δούρατι χαλκεογόμφῳ,  
νυκτὶ ἀλαμπεῖ κυανέῳ τε δνόφῳ καταλείς·  
ἄλμαν δ' ὕπερθεν τεῶν κομᾶν βαθεῖαν

παριόντος κύματος οὐκ ἀλέγεις, οὐδ' ἀνέμων  
φθόγγον, πορφυρέα  
κείμενος ἐν χλανίδι, πρόσσωπον κλιθὲν προσώπῳ.  
εἰ δέ τοι δεινὸν τό γε δεινὸν ἦν,  
καί κεν ἐμῶν ῥημάτων λεπτὸν ὑπεῖγες οὖδας.  
κέλομαι δ', εὐδε βρέφος, εὐδέτω δὲ πόντος,  
εὐδέτω δ' ἄμοτον καχόν·  
μεταιβολία δέ τις φανείη, Ζεῦ πάτερ,  
ἐκ σέθεν· ὅττι δὲ θαρσαλέον ἔπος  
εὐχομαι νόσφιν δίκας, σύγγνωθί μοι.

Note how Symonds has given us that picture with its pathos and its tenderness, but still we feel how far short of the original his translation, artistic as it is, really comes: —

When, in the carven chest,  
The winds that blew and waves in wild unrest  
Smote her with fear, she, not with cheeks unwet,  
Her arms of love round Perseus set,  
And said: O child, what grief is mine!  
But thou dost slumber, and thy baby breast  
Is sunk in rest,  
Here in the cheerless brass-bound bark,  
Tossed amid starless night and pitchy dark.

Nor dost thou heed the scudding brine  
Of waves that wash above thy curls so deep,  
Nor the shrill winds that sweep, —  
Lapped in thy purple robe's embrace,  
Fair little face!  
But if this dread were dreadful too to thee,  
Then wouldst thou lend thy listening ear to me;  
Therefore I cry, — Sleep, babe, and sea be still,  
And slumber our unmeasured ill!  
Oh, may some change of fate, sire Zeus, from thee  
Descend, our woes to end!  
But if this prayer, too overbold, offend  
Thy justice, yet be merciful to me!



**PRIMITIVE SIGNIFICATION.**

The ignoring of the primitive signification of a word, which is encouraged by the unambitious method of searching the vocabulary for that meaning which may fit the context, cannot be too severely condemned. Where is the mental discipline of independent discrimination, if one is to turn to the vocabulary for a ready-made selection? I believe that the dictionaries often become a mere mental crutch, and a slavish dependence upon them is as stultifying as the use of a translation. Special dictionaries which emphasize special meanings tend to increase this evil. Nothing can be more apt than the following figure of Cauer: "The derived signification of words are like cut flowers which soon wither, whereas one who has fixed upon the primitive meaning possesses a living stem from which with fostering he can secure blossoms which are always new. The teaching of the primitive signification is that branch of philology which can be most productive of good results to the pupil, for it furnishes him little problems which his youthful mind investigates with success, and also helps toward the understanding of his own language."<sup>1</sup>

No task is more delicate than the choice of an

<sup>1</sup> Cauer, *Die Kunst des Uebersetzens*, p. 21.

English word to convey the idea of the original; it is, as I have said, precisely like the selection of color by the artist. Take that Homeric word which well-nigh baffles the translator, that is, *δαιμόνιος*. "Our dictionaries seek in vain," says Cauer, "to give a suitable rendering of it." Lehrs' explanation is a good one, namely, "That person whose manner of action is so different from what is usual or expected that we can explain it only through the theory of a divine interference." Let us take some of the examples cited by Cauer: δ. 774, "Are you crazy?" or perhaps better, "What is the matter with you?" ψ. 165, "I don't understand you." Z. 407, *Δαιμόνιε, φθίσει σε τὸ σὸν μένος*, "You infatuate man, your courage will be your destruction."

As a general rule, the same English word should be used to represent the same foreign word. But often, as we have illustrated by the intersecting but non-coincident circles, the idea of the English word corresponding to the idea of the foreign word in one application may be entirely at variance with it in another. The policy of Rothfuchs in translating Homer is excellent, that is, to translate the ornamental epithets by the same word when they recur in reference to the same person or thing. The idea in *θαλερός* which is applicable in the phrase *θαλερὸς γάμος* is entirely different from that in *θαλερὸν δάκρυ* (*cf.* Cauer, p. 48). No one English word can be found whose circle of ideas can coincide with

the circle of the widely divergent ideas which are concentrated about the primitive meaning of *θαλερός*. Now what shall the translator do? He must not sin against his own language by crowding into an English word a lot of unnatural meanings. He has no right to say "blooming marriage" and "blooming tear," lest the epithet become but a meaningless sound. He must select an English word which will cut the circle of *θαλερός* sufficiently to allow a common idea to lie within both circumferences. In whatever application the Greek epithet contains this idea, the English word will adequately reproduce it. In the same way, the circle of another English word must intersect the circle of *θαλερός* at other points, in order that a common idea may be found for a different application.

In the translation of the same foreign word by the same English word in the same application, and in the translation by a consistently different word in different applications, the translator is faithful to his real task, that is, *the reproduction of the feelings kindled by the use of the words in the original.*

## SYNONYMS.

When a foreign writer repeatedly uses the same word, the translator has no right to attempt the so-called refinement of his style by seeking to avoid repetition. The superb diction of Matthew Arnold is a standing contradiction to the old theory that the same word or phrase must not recur in too close connection. When a writer has occasion to express exactly the same idea, there is no reason why he should not repeat his former expression, instead of studiously endeavoring to run a synonym into its place. For example, in *Od.*, *ε.* 217, *εἶδος ἀκιδνοτέρῃ μέγεθος τ' εἴσαντα ιδέσθαι*, we ought with Cauer to translate *εἶδος* and *ιδέσθαι* by words of the same root. Very effective is the repetition in *nigris oculis nigroque crine* of Horace's stanza:—

Liberum et Musas Veneremque et illi  
Semper hærentem puerum canebat;  
Et Lycum nigris oculis nigroque  
Crine decorum.

Of Bacchus and the Muses sung,  
And Cupid, still at Venus' side,  
And Lycus, beautiful and young,  
Dark-haired, dark-eyed.

— Conington.

On the other hand, when synonyms exist in the original, great care should be used in reproducing them. Cauer suggests that the distinction between *δέμας*, *φύή*, *εἶδος* (Od., ε. 212 fg.) should be preserved by translating "form," "stature," "look" (*Gestalt*, *Wuchs*, *Aussehen*). So the translator should differentiate *ius* and *fas* in Persius' striking lines : —

Quin damus id Superis, de magna quod dare lance  
Non possit magni Messallae lippa propago :  
Compositum ius fasque animo, sanctosque recessus  
Mentis, et incoctum generoso pectus honesto.

Give we to the gods such offerings as great Messalla's  
blear-eyed son cannot give, be his dish never so ample, —  
duty to God and man well blended in the mind, purity in  
the heart's shrine, and a bosom full of the inbred nobility  
of goodness. — *Tyrrell*.

Right here I wish to apply the words of Cauer respecting Homeric phraseology : —

"A certain uniformity of expression is essential not to the thought, but to the style. It may seem to us strange, and many times tedious, that the same turns of expression so constantly recur; that morning and evening, eating and drinking, question and answer, wound and death, are always found with the same delineations; that the day is always designated 'divine,' the sea always 'gray,' the ships always 'swift,' even though they lie in the harbor, the sky always

‘starry,’ even in the bright day; that Zeus calls Clytæmnestra’s seducer ‘a [hero] without blemish’ at the very moment when he is speaking of his crime.

“But such outgrowth belongs to the very body of the old epic, and the translator who strips it off mars it. Two German translators have done this. Hermann Grimm expressly boasts that he has omitted the customary high-sounding epithets. Wilhelm Jordan, on the other hand, has sought to keep alive the standing epithets by translating them differently in different places. He has for ποδώκεα Πηλεΐωνα six expressions, — ‘the swift Achilles,’ ‘the swift Pelides,’ ‘the swift son of Peleus,’ ‘the swift-rushing Achilles,’ ‘Pelides, master in the race’; and finally, omitting the epithet as Grimm has done, he translates simply ‘Pelides.’ Both scholars have injured where they intended to help, especially Jordan, since he not only ignores an element of epic style, but puts a false one in its place. A charm of Homer’s recital lies in this, that it lets us share for a moment in that higher world-vision in which all things appear bathed in a golden luster, — a vision whose reality the Greek people so clearly recognized and so charmingly set forth in the belief that it could have lived only in the memory of a blind old bard.”<sup>1</sup>

The translator ignores the author’s use of synonyms when he renders τῶν ἰσων as τῶν αὐτῶν (“Œdipus Tyrannus” of Sophocles, l. 1498, καὶ τῶν

<sup>1</sup>Cauer, Die Kunst des Uebersetzens, pp. 48-50.

ἴσων | ἐκτῆσαθ' ὑμᾶς ὥνπερ αὐτὸς ἐξέφυ), "from the same source whence he sprang"; rather let him translate with Jebb, "from a source which was even as that whence he sprang." The frequent empty English translation of such Greek words as *ἔργον*, *πράγμα*, *κακός* is slovenly in the extreme. How we should render *ἔργον* depends largely on the point of view. If we look forward, *ἔργον* becomes a "duty" or "task"; if we look backward, it becomes a "deed" (cf. Cauer, p. 50). How often does discrimination suffer in the rendering of *πράγμα*. The context alone must determine the exact English word to be employed; for example, "Seven against Thebes" of Æschylus, l. 689, *ἐπεὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα κάρτ' ἐπισπέρχει θεός*, "since God mightily urges on the crisis."

The remarks of Cauer respecting the Latin *res* are significant and contain a broad application to the class of words we are discussing. "The reason for the multiplicity of meanings in such a word lies, not in the rich content of the Latin conception, but in its emptiness. The word is like a vessel into which is thrown the idea that is gained from the surrounding clauses. The simple and concise Roman method of thought made it possible for such an implied idea to depend upon the context; our more complex, but at the same time more loosely joined, lines of thought demand an outward help to grasp correctly the idea. When the Roman read *haec res* or *eius rei* or *quam rem*, he knew of himself whether it was a deed or a

thought, a demand or a concession, a theory or a fact, a purpose or an action, a hope or a fear, a design or a result, an object or a relation ; whereas an (English) author is forced continuously to remind his reader of what he is treating. Translations, as those here indicated, must not be avoided in the belief that they do not correspond closely enough to the original ; it is not the words but the thought that we must translate. The distinction lies only in this, that to the foreign author it did not seem necessary, as in the case of *res*, or it was not practicable, as in many Homeric conceptions, where we must differentiate to show in language that which to the author stood clearly enough before his mind.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cauer, Die Kunst des Uebersetzens, pp. 53, 54.



## ETYMOLOGY.

What part should etymology play in the work of translation? I believe it is very easy for one interested in philology to import too much of this into a realm which lies quite distinct from it. As a general thing the etymology of a word is of little service to the translator. The province of the philologist is one; that of the translator is another.<sup>1</sup> Cauver suggests that the translator should not concern himself with etymologies which were not apparent to the authors themselves.

On the other hand, all etymologies, whether real

<sup>1</sup> I have often been asked how far the teacher should make use of etymology. There are some cases, I believe, when it may be made the instrument of fixing in the mind the root meaning of the word. But when once introduced, it should be made as plain as is practicable. The teacher may assert that the Latin *fungo*, for example, is the same word as our English *dough*. The pupil will believe the assertion, but at the same time he will wonder at such a seemingly strange connection. On the other hand, if the teacher should lead him to the primitive *DHEIGH*, and explain how initial *dh*, through an intervening stage of a sound like our *th* in *thin*, became *f* in Latin, the student will begin to see that there have been at work great phonetic laws, and that what seems strange is after all very regular. This treatment when used with discretion is stimulating, while the result will be that the pupil, with the English cognate before him, can never fail to associate *fungo* with the idea of "work in plastic material." But philological matter, for the mere sake of philology, should have no place in the younger classes. To immature students the subject can only be distracting and confusing.

or fanciful, of which the writer was conscious, should not only be recognized, but carefully reproduced, since these have to do with the translator's art. No translation, for example, preserves the spirit of the original which does not render the etymological play on words: Λύκει' ἀναξ, λύκειος γενοῦ ("Seven against Thebes," 145), "Wolf-lord, prove thy wolfish power" (Verrall). The sense of many a passage in Dante rests on just such a turn of the sentence; for example, *Qui vive la pietà quand'è ben morta*, "Here can live piety [*pietà*] when pity [*pietà*] is dead." The translator can easily observe etymology in such words as συντόμως, "concisely," ἐμπέδως, "constantly"; or, better still, to use an Anglo-Saxon word, "steadfastly." Etymology demands the rendering of all negative ideas by negative ideas. It is a frequent sin of the translator to substitute a positive for the negative. He often translates, for example, ἄτιμος, "shameful," where he ought to give the negative "unhonored"; again he translates *immemor*, "forgetful," instead of "unmindful."

The *figuræ etymologicae* are characteristic of an author's style; they strike the reader or hearer as two similar sounds strike the ear: it is unpardonable in the translator if he ignores them. We should not render μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαύρους ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς — ὅπου κλέπται — κλέπτουσιν (Matt. 6:19), "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . where thieves . . . steal." In such a translation the

effect of the repetition of similar sounds through the recurrence of the same root is entirely lost. Etymology requires, "Do not treasure for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . where robbers . . . rob." The etymological figure, important as it is, has been so frequently slighted in translation that there is need of a word of caution against its neglect. How effective is it in the familiar passage, *Ad senem senex de senectute scripsi*, "I wrote to an old man, being an old man myself, about old age"! Again we see its power in the equally well-known words of Ennius' tragedy: —

Ego deum genus esse dixi et dicam caelitum :  
Sed eos non curare opinor, quid agat humanum genus  
Nam si curant bene bonis sit, male malis, quod nunc  
abest.

"I maintain and always shall maintain that there is a race of gods up in heaven, but they don't bother, I guess, about what men do here, for if they did, it would go justly with the just and badly with the bad, which is now far from the case."

## THE ORDER OF WORDS.

If translation were the rendering of the foreign words or the foreign constructions into the corresponding English, then literalness would have to be insisted upon. But since translation is nothing less than the reproduction of the impressions, the feelings, and the emotions that were aroused in the native mind as the thought of the sentence first came to it, the translator, as far as his art and the idiom of his language will allow, must unfold the idea in his English just as the original sentence unfolded it;<sup>1</sup> for example,

<sup>1</sup> Christ, in commenting on the word-order (τάξις) of Demosthenes, cites Olynthiac, iii, 18: εἰτ' οἷσθ' αὐτόν, οἱ ἐποίησαν μὲν οὐδὲν ἂν κακόν, μὴ παθεῖν δ' ἐφυλάξαντ' ἂν ἰσως, τούτους μὲν ἐξαπατᾶν αἰρεῖσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ προλέγοντα βιάζεσθαι, ὑμῖν δ' ἐκ προρρήσεως πολεμήσειν καὶ ταῦθ' ἔως ἂν ἐκόντες ἐξαπατᾶσθε. His observations on the above passage are very fine. "Wir haben hier ein konditionales Sachverhältnis, aber das bringt der Redner nicht in der langweiligen Form der Logik mit Vorder- und Nachsatz vor (wenn. . . so), sondern in kraftvoller Nebeneinanderstellung der Gegensätze und mit wirksamstem Appell an das eigene Urteil der Zuhörer (οἷσθ' αὐτόν — πολεμήσειν). Gestellt sind die Worte so, dass nicht ein nichtssagendes Pronomen dem Relativsatz vorangeht, sondern das Relativum οἱ mit dem Demonstrativum τούτους wirkungsvoll aufgenommen wird, dass ferner die entgegengesetzten Pronomina τούτους und ὑμῖν an der Spitze stehen und dass die Gegensätze ἐξαπατᾶν und βιάζεσθαι die nichtsbedeutenden Worte αἰρεῖσθαι — προλέγοντα in die Mitte nehmen. Um dem Zweifel, ob die Duodezstaaten sich überhaupt zur Wehr setzen würden, kräftigeren Ausdruck zu geben, ist von der gewöhnlichen Stellung ἰσως ἂν ἐφυλάξαντο Umgang genommen und das zweifelnde

*Samnĭtium caesi tria milia ducenti* (Livy, x, 34, 3), "The Samnites were slain to the number of three thousand two hundred." The vigor of the famous expression of Louis XIV, *L'état c'est moi*, "The state—it is I," is altogether lost in the customary but tame rendering, "I am the state." I recall how this inversion of order, a thing seemingly so trivial, has become a grievous fault in the translation of several Sanskrit philosophical treatises by a distinguished German scholar. Professor Whitney's criticism concerning it applies equally well to all translation: "The difference in order, it may be said, is very small, like that between  $a=b$  and  $b=a$ ; yet there is a real difference whether one starts from the one point or from the other in making the comparison; this is evidenced by the care which is taken almost everywhere (not quite without exception) by the translator to cast the predication into this form,—inverting, as I think, the true relation, and sometimes against very distinct evidence to the contrary" (Review of Böhtlingk's "Upanishads").

In the normal order the writer or speaker starts with the known, or, as Weil puts it, the "initial notion," and proceeds to the unknown, or "goal of discourse." It is not always the emphatic word

ἵσως mit nachdruck an den Schluss gesetzt; um endlich den anstössigen Hiatus αἰρεῖσθαι ἢ προλέγοντα zu vermeiden, erlaubt sich der Redner ein überflüssiges oder doch nicht notwendiges μάλλον zwischen die klaffenden Vokale zu schleben."—*Geschichte der griechischen Litteratur*, p. 345.

which stands first. Precision demands that the speaker begin with the word most intimately connected with the thought of the preceding sentence. Take the common example, *Romulus Romam condidit*, and note the following comments: "The order of words in this proposition will depend on the context, on the thread of the discourse. If the subject under discussion is the founding of cities, the 'initial notion' or 'psychological subject' will be the founding, and the order will be, *condidit Romam Romulus*, 'the founder of Rome was Romulus.' If, on the contrary, the subject in hand is the founder, the order will be, *idem Romulus Romam condidit*, 'the same Romulus founded Rome.' If the subject is the city's founding, the order will be, *hanc urbem condidit Romulus*, 'this city was founded by Romulus.' In each instance the principle of connection operates; the idea connecting with what precedes, comes first—the new idea comes last. In other words, the progression is from the known to the unknown. Or, expressed in still different terms, the 'psychological subject' comes first in each instance; the 'psychological predicate' last."<sup>1</sup>

We need to note the differentiation of principal and subordinate sentences. In the principal sentence, as Wunderlich ("*Der deutsche Satzbau*") shows, thought and speech coöperate at the same time, the

<sup>1</sup> McKnight, Primitive Teutonic Order of Words. The Journal of Germanic Philology, Vol. I.

sentence consisting of individual parts treated as a unity. But in the subordinate sentence, language follows thought, and deals with a finished concept.

Emphasis of course changes the word-order, but how it shall be changed rests entirely upon the nature of the sentence and the character of the language. This has been well expressed by McKnight:—

“To form a more accurate notion of the influence of emphasis in determining word-order, you must bear in mind that this influence is an indirect one. The desire to emphasize first influences the accentuation, and only indirectly, through the accentuation, influences the order of words. The principle of emphasis, then, influences word-order only in this way, that a writer or speaker always endeavors to place the word to be emphasized in the position that naturally has the stress, the next most important word in the position that naturally has the secondary stress, and so on, thus placing the ideas in perspective.

“To determine the principles of accentuation, then, is necessary before one can understand the influence of the principle of emphasis on word-order. This has not yet been satisfactorily done. In making such a determination, the unit of language considered must be, not the logical unit, the sentence, but the spoken unit, the breath group. At present we know only that the accentuation is different in different kinds of clauses, the interrogative clause differing in this respect from the affirmative clause,

and that different languages have peculiar modes of accentuation. For example, in French the accent seems to fall naturally at the end of the breath group; in Irish it seems to fall naturally at the beginning. Note the peculiar influence of the different national modes of accentuation on the word-order in the following sentences: 'At such a time as this I would n't tell you a lie'; 'It's not a lie that I'd be tellin' you now.'"

We see that the translator must so arrange his words as to preserve emphasis even at the sacrifice, if needs be, of grammatical construction; for example, *Persuasit nox, amor, vinum adolescentia* (Terence, "Adelphoe," 470), "The witchery was night, flirtation, wine and youth" (Lane); ὦδε γὰρ κρατεῖ | γυναικὸς ἀνδρόβουλον ἐλπίζον κέαρ (Æschylus, "Agamemnon," 10), "For such power has a woman's fancying heart." The English emphatic order is entirely at variance with that of the language we are translating in the case of "Lucretius," ii, 145: *Et variae volucres nemora avia pervolitantes | aera per tenerum liquidis loca vocibus opplent*. The strong emphasis that falls on *liquidis* is brought over into English only through the postposition of the adjective. "And motley birds, in pathless woods, that flit through lither sky, fill space with carols clear" (Lane). In the same way the emphasis on the last two words in *Nulla placere diu nec vivere carmina possunt, | quae scribuntur aquae potoribus* (Horace, Epis-



ties, i, 19, 2) is brought out by the English order, "No verse can take or be long-lived that by teetotalers is writ" (Lane). The emphatic genitive preceding its noun, for example, *Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris | Italiam . . . venit*, is brought out in the translation, "Arms and the man I sing from Troy's shores the first to come to Italy" (Lane). In Æschylus, "Seven against Thebes," 338, 339, *πολλὰ γάρ, εἴτε πτόλις δαμασθῆ*, — *ἐή, δυστυχῇ τε πράσσει*, don't translate, "When a city is taken, it has great and hapless sufferings," since the clause *εἴτε πτόλις δαμασθῆ* is comparatively unemphatic and simply describes the situation. The emphasis is on *πολλὰ* and *δυστυχῇ*. Render "Many and hapless are the woes a city suffers when once it is captured." In Thucydides, i, 1, the force of the original order *κίνησις αὕτη μέγιστη* can be reproduced by the English, "Of all movements this was the greatest." The awful situation pictured in the "Œdipus Tyrannus" of Sophocles, 456, is intensified by the position of the words which Symonds has well imitated: —

*Φανήσεται δὲ παισὶ τοῖς αὐτοῦ ξυνῶν  
ἀδελφὸς αὐτὸς καὶ πατήρ, καὶ ἥς ἔφυ  
γυναικὸς υἱὸς καὶ πόσις, καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς  
δούλοsporός τε καὶ φονεὺς.*

He shall be shown to be with his own children  
Brother and sire in one, of her who bore him  
Husband at once and offspring, of his father  
Bedmate and murderer.

The following points must be observed in the effort to imitate the original order of words or to preserve emphasis.

**Change in Construction.** — The translator should never hesitate to vary the construction, if by so doing he can bring out the thought more nearly in the order in which the foreign sentence presented it; for example, Æschylus, "Agamemnon," 255: *ὡς θέλει* — *ἔρκος*, "as is the wish of this defense." A most frequent variation is the conversion of the active voice into the English passive, and *vice versa*; for example, *L'on me dit tant de mal de cet homme, et j'y en vois si peu, que je commence à soupçonner qu'il n'ait un mérite si importun, qui éteigne celui des autres* (La Bruyère), "I am told so much evil of that man and I see so little of it in him, that I begin to suspect that he has some inconvenient merit which extinguishes that of others."

So in the translation of Goethe's vivid lines:—

Harrend auf des Morgens Wonne,  
Oestlich spähend ihren Lauf,  
Ging auf einmal mir die Sonne  
Wunderbar im Süden auf.

Zog den Blick nach jener Seite,  
Statt der Schluchten, statt der Höh'n,  
Statt der Erd — und Himmelsweite,  
Sie, die Einzige, zu spähn.

Eastward was my glance directed,  
 Watching for the sun's first rays;  
 In the south — oh, sight of wonder!  
 Rose the bright orb's sudden blaze.

Thither was my eye attracted;  
 Vanished bay and mountain height,  
 Earth and heaven unseen and all things,  
 All but that enchanted light.

— *Anster.*

This conversion of voice is often demanded in the translation of Latin and Greek. If we should desire to put even into modern Greek the ordinary English sentence, "A new, attractive edition of the *Anabasis* has recently been issued by an American publishing house," we should say, Νέαν ἐλυστικήν ἔκδοσιν τῆς Ἀναβάσεως ἐδημοσίευσεν ἐσχάτως Ἀμερικανικὴ ἐταιρία πρὸς ἐκτύπωσιν συγγραμμάτων.

**Antithesis.** — Antithesis in language is the same principle as that in the painter's art which brings out a white object with greater intensity when placed before a dark background; for example, Ben Jonson's "All concord's born of contraries." Note the German proverb, *Kleine Diebe hängt man, grosse lässt man laufen*, "The petty thief we hang, the great we let go free." Splendid are the antitheses of Simonides, in his eulogy on Sparta's dead: —

τῶν ἐν θερμότητι θανόντων  
 εὐκλεῆς μὲν ἂν τύχα, καλὸς δ' ὁ πότμος,  
 βωμὸς δ' ὁ τάφος, πρὸ γόων δὲ μῆστις, ὁ δ'  
 οἶκτος ἔπαινος·

ἐντάφιον δὲ τοιοῦτον οὐτ' εὐρώως  
οὐθ' ὁ πανδαμάτωρ ἀμαυρώσει χρόνος.

"Of those who at Thermopylae have fallen, glorious their fate and fair their lot. An altar is their tomb, instead of tears undying memory, their requiem a hymn of praise. Such sepulchre nor rust nor all-subduing time shall dim."

Contrast makes more dismal the gloomy picture of Catullus:—

Soles occidere et redire possunt:  
Nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux  
Nox est perpetua una dormienda.

— *v. 4-6.*

Suns will rise and set again:  
But for us, when once doth wane  
This poor pageant's little light,  
We must sleep in endless night.

— *Tyrrell.*

The grouping of the antitheses ought to be as close in English as in the original; for example, Euripides, "Alcestis," 635, *παρεῖς ἄλλω θανεῖν | νέω γεραίως*, "permitting another to die, one who was young, though thou wert old"; Æschylus, "Seven against Thebes," 740, *πόννοι δόμων νέοι παλαιοῖσι συμμιγείς κακοῖς*, "sorrows of the home mingled with woes, the new with the old." "To extirpate antithesis from literature altogether would be to destroy at one stroke about eight tenths of all the wit, ancient and modern, now existing in the world" (author of "Lacon").

**Collocation.** — The placing together of words of similar sound or etymology must be made as effective in a translation as it was in the foreign text; for example, Æschylus, "Agamemnon," 641, πολλοὺς δὲ πολλῶν ἐξαγισθέντας δόμων, "many from many homes"; Euripides, "Alcestis," 799, ὄντας δὲ θνητοὺς θνητὰ καὶ φρονεῖν χρεῶν, "for a mortal mortal thoughts are becoming"; Lucretius, "De Rerum Natura," i, 272, *casta inceste*, "a stainless maid with stain of blood" (Munro). Collocation becomes very forceful in the despairing words of Cassandra:—

καὶ νῦν ὁ μάντις μάντιν ἐκπράξας ἐμὲ  
ἀπήγαγ' ἐς τοιάσδε θανάσιμους τύχας.

Now he who made me prophetess, the prophet,  
Himself hath brought me to these straits of death.  
— *Symonds*.

**Chiasmus.** — It is just as much demanded of the translator that he should conserve such a figure in the style of the original as that the artist should faithfully portray the alternation of shades in the landscape; for example, Sophocles, "Œdipus Tyrannus," 1250, ἐξ ἀνδρὸς ἄνδρα καὶ τέκν' ἐκ τέκνων τέκοι, "from a husband a husband, and children from children."

**Hyperbaton.** — The bold hyperbata of many classic writers — for example, Pindar, τῷ μὲν εἶπε· φίλια δῶρα

Κυπρίας ἄγ' εἴ τι — ἐς χάριν | τέλλεται (Ol., i, 75) — cannot be imitated in English without making the sentence ridiculously awkward and obscure. Yet we are obliged to confess that such transposition of words gave to the original a power and variety of which we feel something in our English sentence, "He wanders earth around."

**Tmesis.** — As is well known, there was no tmesis in Homer, since the preposition had simply its historic adverbial force. Later writers, however, felt that there was a real "cutting asunder" of words, and through false imitations introduced this so-called figure of etymology. Ennius' famous line, *cere saxo comminuit brum*, gives us a vocal picture of the rock crushing the skull which baffles reproduction. The impression conveyed by tmesis on the mind of Greek or Roman is similar to that made upon us in our rendering of Horace's *quo me cunque rapit tempestas*, "what way soever the storm drives me."

**Alliteration.** — Since translation is the effort to reproduce impressions corresponding to those of the original, it is the translator's duty to imitate intentional alliteration wherever the English vocabulary may allow it without affectation; for example, Æschylus, "Agamemnon," 295, *φρυκτοῦ φῶς*, "beacon's blaze"; so in the rather tasteless lines of Ennius: —

Septingenti sunt paulo plus aut minus anni  
Augusto augurio postquam inclita condita Roma est.

Years seven hundred, more or less, have passed  
 Since Rome with auguries august arose.

—*Tyrrell.*

Every one is familiar with his notoriously alliterative verse :—

O Tite tute Tati tibi tanta tyranne tulisti.

In fact, so great is the influence of alliteration that we ought not to hesitate to change *lacrimis decoret* of Cicero's transmission so that the epitaph of the poet may read :—

Nemo me dacrumis decoret, nec funera fletu  
 Faxit.

**Asyndeton.** — The lively succession of events pictured in the original by the omission of the conjunction must be reproduced with corresponding abruptness; for example, *Le Bramin me dit un jour : je voudrais n'être jamais né. Je lui demandai pourquoi. Il me répondit ; j'étudie depuis quarante ans ; ce sont quarante années de perdues ; j'enseigne les autres, et j'ignore tout* (Voltaire, "Histoire d'un bon Bramin"), "The Brahmin said to me one day: 'I could wish that I never had been born'; I asked him why. He answered me: 'I have studied for forty years; they are forty years lost; I teach others and I am ignorant of everything.'" *Chassez les préjugés par la porte, ils rentreront par la fenêtre* (Frederick to Voltaire), "Drive prejudices out the door, they come

back by the window." There is no place for superfluous words in the following: *Caesari omnia uno tempore erant agenda : vexillum proponendum, signum tuba dandum, ab opere revocandi milites, acies instruenda milites cohortandi, signum dandum* (Cæsar, Gallic War, ii, 20), "Cæsar was obliged to attend to everything at the same moment; the flag had to be displayed, the bugle sounded, the soldiers called in from work, the battle line formed, the soldiers encouraged, the signal given." Note Cicero, "Pro Roscio Amerino," 60: *Peroravit aliquando, adsedit. Surrexi ego. Respirare visus est, quod non alius potius diceret. Coepi dicere. Usque eo animadverti, iudices, eum alias res agere, antequam Chrysogonum nominavi; quem simul atque attigi, statim homo se erexit, mirari visus est. Intellexi quid eum pupugisset.* "After a while he wound up, took his seat; up rose your humble servant. He seemed to take courage from the fact it was nobody else. I began to speak. I noticed, gentlemen, that he was inattentive all along till I named Chrysogonus; but the moment I touched on him, the creature perked up at once, seemed to be surprised. I knew what the rub was" (Lane). Beautiful is Sappho's picture of the rest of evening: —

*Ἑσπερε, πάντα φέρων, ὅσα φαίνοις ἐσχέδας' αὖως,  
φέρεις οἶν, φέρες αἶγα, φέρεις ἄπυ ματέρι παῖδα.*

Hesper, thou bringest back again  
All that the gaudy day-beams part,



The sheep, the goat, back to their pen,  
The child home to his mother's heart.

— *Frederick Tennyson.*

**Polysyndeton.** — When the foreign text avoids swift transition through the repetition of conjunctions, thus enabling the mind to linger at will on each thought as a unity, the translator is compelled to do the same. Well is this illustrated in the strong and familiar passage: *πέπεισμαι γὰρ ὅτι οὔτε θάνατος, οὔτε ζωὴ, οὔτε ἄγγελοι, οὔτε ἀρχαὶ, οὔτε ἐνεστῶτα, οὔτε μέλλοντα, οὔτε δυνάμεις, οὔτε ὑψώματα, οὔτε βάθος, οὔτε τις κτίσις ἑτέρα δυνήσεται ἡμᾶς χωρῖσαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ* (Rom. 8: 38, 39), "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God."

It often happens, on the other hand, that the idiom of the foreign tongue joins sentences in chainlike fashion, while the English rather avoids such connection. Cumbersome, indeed, would it be to render the conjunction in Sappho's stanza, —

*Δέδυκε μὲν ἂ σελάννα  
καὶ Πληιάδες, μέσαι δέ  
νύκτες, παρὰ δ' ἔρχετ' ὥρα,  
ἔγω δὲ μόνα κατεύδω.*

The silver moon is set;  
The Pleiades are gone;  
Half the long night is spent, and yet  
I lie alone.

— *Merivale.*

The moon hath left the sky:  
Lost is the Pleiad's light;  
It is midnight  
And time slips by;  
But on my couch alone I lie.

— *Symonds.*

## FIGURES OF SPEECH.

Do not strip off any figurative ornament from the style of a foreign author. In avoiding this the skill of a translator is brought to its severest test. It often happens that a metaphor in one language becomes unbearable in another. The translator, it is true, may be forced to change the figure, yet he is faithless to his task if he destroys it altogether. The metaphor in *κλύθι μεν, ἀργυρότοξ', δς Χρύσην ἀμφιβέβηκας* | *Κίλλαν τε ζαθέην* (Il., A, 37, 38) is that of one bestriding another to shield him from harm, — a wonderfully expressive figure, yet one which becomes gross when brought over into English. Should we translate “protect,” the strength, the boldness, as well as the tenderness of the original are gone. Let us turn the tables and note how the modern Greek translators of Shakespeare have struggled with one or two of our own metaphors: “Aye, there’s the rub” Damirale<sup>1</sup> renders, *Ἄ! ἰδοὺ ὁ Γόρδιος δεσμός*; again, “The time is out of joint, O cursed spite that ever

<sup>1</sup> Damirale remarks, “There’s the rub” = *Ἴδου τὸ πρόσκομμα*. “To rub,” λέγει ὁ (Wright) εἶνε ὁρος τεχνικός, σημαίνων τὴν σύγκρουσιν ἢ τὸ ἐμπόδιον, ὅπερ συναντᾷ ἡ σφαῖρα τρέχουσα. Ἐνομίσαμεν ὅτι ἀποδίδομεν τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ποιητοῦ ἐρμηνεύοντες διὰ τοῦ: Γόρδιος δεσμός. “To rub,” says Wright, “is a technical term signifying the friction or the resistance which a rolling ball encounters. I believe that I render the spirit of the poet by translating ‘Gordian knot.’”

I was born to set it right," one attempts, 'Ο χρόνος τῆς οδοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐξέπεσε. Ἀλλοίμονον μοι ὅτι ἦλθον εἰς τὴν γῆν ἵνα ὀρίσω τοῦτον πάλιν (Pervanoglos); another, Οἱ καιροὶ ἐξηρθρώθησαν. Κατηραμένη μοῖρα! Ἐπέπρωτο νὰ γεννηθῶ ἐγώ, εἰς τάξιν νὰ τοὺς φέρω (Damirale); a third, —

ὁ κόσμος πάει στὰ στραβά. ὦ! Δὲν ἀπεμειν' ἄλλο  
παρὰ ἐγὼ νὰ γεννηθῶ στὰ ἴσια νὰ τὸν βάλω!

—Vikelas.

And a fourth, —

Ἐξηρθρώθη ὁ καιρός· τῆς μοίρας πείσμα ὦ πόσο  
πικρόν, ἐγὼ νὰ γεννηθῶ νὰ τὸν διορθώσω.

—Polylas.

There is a beautiful metaphor, *avasāna*, in one of the Hindu burial hymns which we spoil when we translate, as is so often done, "resting place." The Sanskrit word means literally "an unyoking," — the yoke is taken from the neck and the weary cattle are turned into the pasture land. So the dead has reached the "bound of life where he lays his burdens down."

Again, the translator too frequently ignores that rhetorical device (synecdoche) which singles out a leading part or characteristic (*pars pro toto*, *materia pro re*, etc.). It is not required that the specific part mentioned be thrust into the translation. The usage of our language may have settled on stereotyped phrases differing from those of the foreign tongue. It is the effect of the *figure*, and not the literal ren-

dering of a *word*, that should be the translator's purpose. We should not hesitate, for example, to render in Æschylus, "Agamemnon," 116, *φανέντες ἱκταρ μελάθρων*, "seen near the palace walls," regardless as to what part of the building *μελάθρων* technically referred.

Frequently a modest and restricted form of statement (*diminutio*) carries with it far greater force than a positive, bold expression of fact. The translator should be very careful to bring this over into English; for example, Pindar, Ol., i, 53, *ἀκέρδεια λέλογχεν θαμινὰ κακαγόρους*. "Little gain comes to those who tell bad tales." When cause is expressed in the guise of a condition, the English sentence should be true to the original; for example, Il., A. 39-42, *εἴ ποτέ τοι χαρίεντ' ἐπὶ νηὸν ἔρεψα, | — τίσειαν Δαναοὶ ἐμὰ δάκρυα σοῖσι βέλεσσιν*. "If I have roofed for thee a pleasing shrine—may the Danaï atone for my tears by thy shafts." Here the reason for the answer to the prayer is shifted to the responsibility of the god. It is as if the old priest had said, "Look over the past, Apollo; see if I have been faithful in my office." Apollo draws the conclusion. Such rhetorical device makes the hearer do his own reasoning. How much more emphatic than if Chryses had said, "Since I have roofed a shrine for thee, thou must hear my prayer." So in Latin, the translator should avoid rendering *si quidem* by a causal conjunction. The condition "if in fact"

shows that cause was clearly in the mind of the writer, but the responsibility of the conclusion is put upon the reader.

Often a word takes its coloring from the context. Exactness requires that the English word be in itself equally colorless. It is the same principle that requires the painter to give to objects, themselves clear and colorless like the surface of a lake for example, the light and shadows imparted by their environment. In Euripides, "Alcestis," 771, 772, *κακῶν γὰρ μυρίων ἐρρύετο, | ὀργὰς μαλάσσουσ' ἀνδρός*, the Greek *ὀργὰς* does not mean "anger"; such a notion enters it only by association. So our English *temper* takes its shade of meaning from the surrounding thought. Translate: "She rescued me from a thousand ills by softening her lord's temper." It is true that words, like individuals, can receive a character, more or less fixed, from the company they keep.

A figurative meaning often displaces the primitive signification. As Cauer remarks: "A frequent metaphorical expression loses its figure. This process is like the transition from the crude metal to the stamped bars, from them to the stamped coin, and finally to the paper currency. The ancients were richer in concrete, but poorer in abstract, expressions than we are; or, to put it better, there was in their abstract ideas a concrete element more strongly felt than in ours." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cauer, *Die Kunst des Uebersetzens*, pp. 31, 32.

The taking of words from foreign languages into our vocabulary has helped to make the English abstract. For example, *comprehend* carries to the mind, indifferent to its etymology, simply the abstract idea, while the Anglo-Saxon *grasp* forces its metaphor upon us. In Latin and Greek, as well as German, the words are formed from native roots, and consequently carry on their face the origin of the metaphor;<sup>1</sup> for example, German *antheil* as contrasted with English *sympathy*. The effort of translation being to make the same impression upon the English as was made upon the native mind, a careful choice of words of Anglo-Saxon origin will often preserve the figure with the clearness of the original.<sup>2</sup> For example, *rogo atque oro te colligas virumque praebeas* (Cicero, Fam., 5, 18, 1), "I beg and entreat you, pull yourself together and quit you like a man" (Lane).

The preposition in Greek and Latin frequently holds within itself a figurative meaning, which we cannot bring out except by using a much fuller expression. For example, *ἐκ θανάτου* should not be rendered "from death," but "out of the grasp of death." So Causer suggests that we can easily preserve the figure in Vergil's *sub nocte silenti* by translating "under the mantle of the silent night" (*unter*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Thomas, *Zur Historischen Entwicklung der Metapher im Griechischen*, Erlangen, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> The authorized translation of the Bible contains the largest per cent. of Saxon words, the estimate being that only about one third of its vocabulary is derived from other languages.

*dem Mantel der schweigenden Nacht*); also the figure in *sub casu* (*potes hoc sub casu ducere somno?* Vergil, *Æneid*, iv, 560) by rendering, "Canst thou sleep in peace while this fate hangs over thee?" (*Kanst du ruhig schlafen, während dieses Schicksal über dir schwebt?*).

"In the course of time," says Cauer, "it must often result that individual expressions always occur in definite relation, and by association and use take into themselves an idea which was foreign to them. So *facinus* became (mis)deed, *potestas* became (official) power. How often *χώρα* or *χείρ* is omitted! For *δεξιὰ* we have a correspondingly short (English) expression, *the right*; but we are forced to render *ἀμφοτέρῃσιν* 'with both hands.'

"The greater maturity of our modern thought in the province of abstract nouns often makes our (English) expression shorter than the foreign; for example, *de rebus bonis et malis* (*Tuscul.*, v, 4, 10), 'concerning good and bad'; *quae tamen omnia dulciora fiunt et moribus bonis et artibus* (*Cato Maior*, xviii, 65), 'through character and culture.' On the other hand, such abstract substantives as *satietales* (*Laelius*, xix, 67), 'moments of satiety,' and *excellentiae* (69), 'prominent personal characteristics,' require in (English) the circumlocutions given above."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cauer, *Die Kunst des Uebersetzens*, pp. 70-73.



**THE GREEK PARTICLES.**

Just a few hints for the rendering of Greek particles will not be out of place. In this the translator has a task as delicate as that of the artist in his endeavor to reproduce the exact light and shade in the scene before him. In no case should he think of the literal meaning of the particle. The first and only question which the translator must ask is, "What coloring does it give to the idea?" Then, by any word or words in his power, he should endeavor to transfuse this coloring into his English sentence.

I translate in abridged form the comments of Cauer:—<sup>1</sup>

"The particles have nothing but empty meaning. Into them is forced a fullness of ideas which accompany the thoughts of the speaker, and which form in his mind the framework for his successive sentences. These from time to time show their influence in the significant gesture or in a pair of correlated expressions. Of special importance are those little words which serve to join sentences. A well chosen conjunction achieves something similar to that which a

<sup>1</sup> Cauer appropriately selects as the superscription of his chapter "Partikeln" the words of Schiller: "Im kleinsten Punkte die höchste Kraft."

fortunate turn of the passage achieves on a higher scale; in both there enters an inner relation of preceding and following thoughts; both are disjunctive, while at the same time they connect; they are the joints in the body of the language.

"It often happens that a particle cannot be translated except by a word which is much stronger than the original. When this is so, we had better omit it entirely and preserve the force by the tone of the voice. Such is frequently the case in regard to the Greek *γέ*.

"Of the Homeric expletives, *ἄρα* is especially untranslatable by any single word. It expresses a harmony between thought and fact, so that either the result corresponds to one's expectations or, on the contrary, the thought is made to fit the reality. These ideas are expressed in our two short sentences, 'As one might think,' 'As one must admit.'

"How can the same sentence contain antithesis and confirmation? Yet how often we meet *ἀλλά* — *γάρ*; for example, Od., κ. 202, *ἀλλ' οὐ γάρ τις πρήξις ἐγίγνετο μυρομένοισιν*. In this passage it requires no imagination to hear and see Odysseus as he pauses after the 'but' and with resignation shrugs his shoulders or raises his hands, indicating with half sad, half scornful look, that the lamentation did not last long, for it was no use for them to weep. As we read, we can feel this force, although we mar the sentence if we attempt to express it in words. As in the case

of the strongly adversative *ἀλλά*, so address (for example, *Ἀτρείδῃ*, Ψ. 156; *Φήμιε*, α. 337; *ὦ φίλοι*, κ. 174) is often attended by a gesture, which is confirmed in what follows.

“Of another class are those cases in which the sentence with *γάρ* is inserted as a parenthesis; for example, *ἀλλ’ — οὐ γάρ σφιν ἐφαίνετο κέρδιον εἶναι | μαίεσθαι προτέρω — τοὶ μὲν πάλιν αὖτις ἔβαινον*. Here there is clearly before the mind of the narrator when he begins with *ἀλλά* the statement he is going to make, that is, *τοὶ μὲν πάλιν αὖτις ἔβαινον*, but he breaks off the sentence in order to confirm it.

“Jacob Wackernagel<sup>1</sup> made the discovery that the enclitics and other words of light signification (*ἄν, ἄρα, δέ, μέν, οὖν, τοίνυν*) tend to occupy the second place in the sentence. Although *πέρ* and *γέ* ought generally to follow the emphatic word, yet they come under this influence; for example, in *Il.*, Γ. 3, *ἦντε περ κλαγγή γεράνων πέλει οὐρανόθι πρό*, the *πέρ* goes, not with the preceding *ἦντε* nor the following *κλαγγή*, but with *γεράνων*. The position of *γέ* presents greater difficulty where ‘at least,’ ‘at any rate,’ belongs to the whole thought. Oftentimes it is convenient for the poet to join the *γέ* to a single word which may serve for its natural support; for example, *Il.*, Ξ. 91, 92, *μῦθον, ὃν οὐ κεν ἀνὴρ γε διὰ στόμα πάνπαν ἄγοιτο, | ὅς τις ἐπίσταιτο ᾗσι φρεσὶν ἄρτια βάζειν*.

<sup>1</sup>Jacob Wackernagel, Ueber ein Gesetz der indo-germanischen Wortstellung, *Indogerm. Forschungen*, I (1891-92), pp. 333 fg.).

The meaning is 'at least if he — understood'; formally, however, *γέ* is joined to the logically unemphatic *ἀνὴρ*.<sup>1</sup>

"Where it is impossible to understand *ἄρα, γέ, νύ* in Homer, we can suppose that they were inserted by later bards who recited the epic speech as a half foreign dialect and carelessly used monosyllabic particles to fill out the meter, as text critics in ancient and modern times are fond of doing. The essentially meaningless combination *ἄν κε* furnishes an abundant example of this."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I refer the reader to Gloeckner's *Homerische Partikeln*, which, when completed, will certainly prove a valuable contribution.

<sup>2</sup> Cauer, *Die Kunst des Uebersetzens*, pp. 53–68. For a convenient grouping and discussion of the Greek particles, cf. Brugmann's *Griechische Grammatik* (1900), pp. 525–550, published in Iwan Müller's *Handbuch der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*; also Blemann et Goelzer, *Grammaire comparée du Grec et du Latin*, *Syntaxe* (1897), pp. 341 fg. Among the many works of a more special nature may be mentioned Bäumlein, *Untersuchungen über griech. Partikeln*; Hübner, *Grundr. griech. Synt.*; Eberling, *Lexicon Homericum*; Monro, *Homeric Grammar*; Nägelsbach, *Anmerkungen zur Ilias*; Mutzbauer, *Der homerische Gebrauch der Partikel μέν*; Van Leeuwen, *De particularum κέ et ἄν apud Homerum usu*; Delbrück, *Vergleichende Syntax der indo-germanischen Sprachen* (pp. 497 fg.).







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